

SANSKRIT SYNONYMS

The Sanskrit word for a synonym is *paryāyavacana* or more popularly simply *paryāya* which evidently is a shorter form for the earlier fuller expression. The synonyms are called *paryāyavacanas* for they denote the same meaning in rotation, one by one, *paryāya* literally meaning « rotation »: *paryāyeṇārthaṃ bruvata iti paryāyāḥ*.

Whether two or more words can ever express one and the same meaning is very difficult to say. There is a school of thought that behind the apparent synonymity of words there lie some subtle shades of meaning which can be detected either by a critical study of the context in which they are used or by tracing the semantical history of the words or through the comments offered sometimes by the commentators or their etymological interpretations. In a current language the process of their detection is comparatively easy: The usage itself limiting the words in particular shades only. To explain the point we may take up an instance from the English language. It has a number of words such as ride, scale, climb, mount in the sense for which the Sanskrit word is *ārohaṇa*. Now every one of these denotes *ārohaṇa* but each one of these denotes *ārohaṇa* on a different object. The difference in the senses of these words, therefore, rests on the objects of *ārohaṇa*. Riding is *ārohaṇa* on horse, climbing on a tree or a pole or a mountain etc., scaling on a mountain and so on. Each word we thus see has a specific association with an object and differs in sense only with reference to those objects only. The Mahābhāṣyakāra very vividly brings it out in his comment:

*niyataviṣayāḥ śabdā dṛśyante. tad yathā — samāne  
rakte varṇe gaur lohita iti bhavaty aśvaḥ śoṇa iti.  
samāne ca kāle varṇe gauḥ kṛṣṇa iti bhavaty aśvo hema  
iti. samāne ca śukle varṇe gauḥ śveta iti bhavaty aśvaḥ karka iti<sup>1</sup>.*

In classical languages like Sanskrit the minute difference in sense of the so-called synonyms has to be found out with some effort, for the source-material in their case is their old literature only. And there is difference evidently in literature and current speech. The difference in the sense-shades could apparently not be as manifest in literature as in current speech. And literature too cannot be taken in the process as one single entity. Its different layers represent the process of the change-over of the speech from current coin to conventionalized vehicle of expression, from the speech of the masses to that of the classes. Thus the earlier the layer of literature the more helpful it is for the process of divination of finer distinctions in the meaning of the so-called synonyms. It is the earlier Sanskrit literature that has the largest incidence of the juxtaposition of the synonyms, a sharp pointer to a period when the fine distinction in the senses of the words was still maintained and not forgotten as in later period. As a matter of fact the basic factor leading to the development of synonymy in words is the disappearance in them of the finer shades of meaning over a period of time. It is the approximation in sense that leads to synonymy and the promiscuous use of the words. This is what Kṣīrasvāmin means when he offers the comment: *tamālapatrākṛti kastūryā lalāṭe tamālapatram, tilakākṛti tilakam, citrakam nānāvāṇam, viśiṇaṣṭi viśeṣakam. itthaṃ tilakabhedā ete paryāyatvaṃ tv adūraviprakarṣāt*, on the Amara line: *tamālapatra-tilakacitrakāṇi viśeṣakam*<sup>2</sup>, *tamālapatra* is a sign by musk on the forehead of the form of *tamālapatra*, *tilaka* is of the form of sesame seed, *citraka* is of many colours. *Viśeṣaka* is a distinctive mark. Thus all these are different types of forehead-marks. Synonymy of them is due to the approximation of sense in them.

Some synonyms in Sanskrit originally stood in the relationship of adjective and substantive. In course of time the adjective appropriated to itself the sense of the substantive and became its synonym. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* line: «*tāṃ vinātha vihaṅgo 'sau pakṣi pranaditas tadā*»<sup>3</sup>, *vihaṅga* and *pakṣin*, are juxtaposed. One of them, evidently, *vihaṅga*, meaning literally 'flying in the sky'<sup>4</sup>, is an adjective here. *Pakṣin* with *vihaṅga* would mean 'a bird flying in the sky'. At another place in the same work a similar word, *khecara*, meaning the same as *vihaṅga* is used as an adjective to *pakṣin*: *siṃhavyāghravārāḥānām khecarānām ca pakṣiṇām*. In a *Mahābhārata* verse four words *palāṣin*, *śākhin*, *viṭapin* and *vrkṣa*, all signifying tree in later literature, are used side by side:

---

2. II.6.123.

3. IV.1.55.

4. This is not a conjecture. The word has been actually used in this sense in the *Mahābhārata* verse: *prabhuḥ saṅkalpasiddho 'smi kāmārūpi vihaṅgamaḥ* (*Udyogaparva*, 193.4). Nilakanṭha explains *vihaṅgamaḥ* as «flying in or moving through the sky»: *vihaṅgama ākāśagāmi*.

*palāśinaṃ śākhinaṃ ca tathā viṭapinaṃ punaḥ /  
taṃ dṛṣṭvā jīvitaṃ vṛkṣaṃ kāśyapena mahātmanā // 5.*

Of these the first three, *palāśin*, *śākhin* and *viṭapin* could be adjectives to *vṛkṣa* meaning thereby a tree with leaves, branches and twigs. Other similar pairs in the epics are: *aṃśumat* - *vivasvat*, *triyāmā* - *śarvarī*, *vidyut* - *saudāmanī*, *giri* - *parvata* and so on. Even in as early a work as the *Rgveda* we meet with such instances, e.g., *aśvaṃ na vājinam* <sup>6</sup>, *urvīṃ prthivīm* <sup>7</sup>, *prthivī mahī* <sup>8</sup>, *bhūmim prthivīm* <sup>9</sup>, *yajñam adhvaram* <sup>10</sup>, etc. One each in these *urvī*, *prthivī* and *adhvara* is an adjective to the other, *urvīm prthivīm* or *prthivī mahī* meaning the vast earth, *yajñam adhvaram* meaning non-violent sacrifice. It may incidentally be pointed out here that there is no fixity with regard to the character of the words in Sanskrit works. What serve as adjectives at one place serve as substantives in another. In the *Rgveda* instances quoted above the same *prthivī* or *prthivī* which is an adjective in *prthivī mahī*, *bhūmim prthivīm* is substantive in *urvīm prthivīm*. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* too *vihaṅgama*, a cognate of *vihaṅga* occurring as adjective in the verse quoted above is used as a substantive with *khecara*, the adjective: *vane vanecarāṃś cānyān khecarāṃś ca vihaṅgamān* <sup>11</sup>.

Sometimes words which originally stood in the relationship of *upamāna*, standard of comparison and *upameya*, the thing to be compared, turn into synonyms when the *upamānavācīn* words among them appropriate to themselves the sense of the *upameyavācīn* ones. This is best illustrated by the words *ghana* and *vaṃśa*. The former of these, *ghana*, occurs with *abhra*, in a number of verses in the *Rāmāyaṇa*:

- (1) *vividhābhraghanāpannagocaraḥ* <sup>12</sup>.
- (2) *taṃ abhraghanasaṃkāśam āpatantaṃ mahākapim* <sup>13</sup>.
- (3) *tad balaṃ rākṣasendrāṇāṃ mahābhraghananāditam* <sup>14</sup>.

Literally *ghana* means something solid, vide. Pāṇ. *mūrtau ghanah*, 3.3.77. In expressions like *ghanam dadhi* the *dharma*, the characteristic, is employed to denote the *dharmin*, the possessor of the characteristic. Just as *dadhi*, etc., is said to be *ghana*, similarly the thick clouds are said to be *abhraghana*, the dissolution of the compound being *abhraṃ*

5. *Āstikaparva*, 43.10-11.

6. I.129.2.

7. VII.38.2.

8. X.60.9.

9. V.85.4.

10. I.1.4.

11. IV.13.12.

12. V.57.9.

13. V.57.28.

14. VII.6.61.

*ghana iva* or *abhrasya ghano mūrtir iva*, the solid mass of clouds. In course of time *ghana* originally meaning something solid, a mass, came to acquire the sense of cloud itself.

As for *vaṁśa*, it primarily means bamboo. In the many instances in which it occurs together with *kula* in later literature: *kulavaṁśa-vaṁśah*, etc. it retains its characteristic of *upamānavācītva* with *kula*, the *upameya*. *Vaṁśa*, family, is so called because it is like *vaṁśa*, bamboo, *vaṁśa iva iti vaṁśah*. Just as a bamboo tree, *vaṁśa*, never grows alone, it develops into a full cluster, so it is hoped would do *vaṁśa*, a family.

Sometimes one of the two words that originally stood as an epithet to a substantive gets detached from it, and slips closer to another word maintaining its original character of an epithet. We may take up here as an instance the word *oṣadhīpati*. As pointed out by S. P. Pandit this was used in early literature with reference to Soma both of them standing in the relationship of *viśeṣaṇa* and *viśeṣya*, Soma-oṣadhīpati, Soma, the lord of the herbs. Later it came to be detached from Soma and came to be attached to Indu, the moon. The process is explained by Pandit rather ingeniously in the following words: « The key to the fact seems to be in the word *indu*. This word is frequently found in the *R̥gveda*, but always in the sense of (1) a drop of the soma juice, and (2) the soma juice itself. It appears the word *indu* coming then to signify a globule, or a round little body very naturally became a name of the fuller moon. Now, according to a very common principle that has had such a prominent influence on the development of the Sanskrit vocabulary, viz., that whenever a vocable that signifies two things, has other synonyms, those other synonyms also become each expressive of the same two things, the word *soma* acquired the additional sense of moon. Then, as is very common in the growth of mythology, the conceptions, attributes, etc., connected with the original personified or rather deified concept of *soma*, viz., that of the plant, became attached to the new concept, viz., that of the moon. Thus the whole derivation may be put in the following pseudological form: The word *indu* means both a drop of the juice of the sacrificial plant (or the juice itself) and the moon; a synonym of *indu* in the first sense is the word *soma*, therefore *soma* meant both the plant and the moon. Now, because *soma*, the plant was developed into a personification by certain attributes, therefore, *soma*, the moon, acquired also the same attributes. And thus it is that the moon also came to be described as the King or Lord of the plants »<sup>15</sup>.

Sometimes the words originally signified a general thing which was later particularized. The word *garutmat*, for instance, signified a bird, in general, vide Amara, *nīdodbhavā garutmantaḥ pītsanto nabhasaṅ gamāḥ*<sup>16</sup>, but later came to signify a particular bird, *garuḍa*, too.

15. S. P. Pandit's note on *Raghuvaṁśa*, II.73, in his edn. (B. S. Series).

16. II.5.35.

Conversely the words which signified originally a particular thing came to acquire a general sense. The words *senā*, *ṛtanā*, *vāhinī* etc., now all meaning army in general originally signified different formations of it of varied strength, as is clear from the *Mahābhārata* verse:

*senā pañcaśataṃ nāgā rathās tāvanta eva ca /  
daśa senā ca ṛtanā ṛtanā daśa vāhinī //*<sup>17</sup>.

Nīlakaṇṭha's explanation of it is:

*seneti. tatra gajānāṃ rathānāṃ ca tulyasaṅkhyoktiḥ  
pūrvoktasaṅkhyopalakṣaṇārthā. tena pañcaviṃśatisātāni  
manuṣyāḥ, pañcadaśaśataṃ turagā ity api jñeyam.  
ṛtanāyāṃ tu pañcasahasraṇi narā pañcadaśasahasraṃ aśvāḥ.  
vāhinīyāṃ pañcāśatsahasraṇi nāgās tāvanto rathāḥ  
sārdhalakṣadvayaṃ narā sārtha (rdha?) lakṣaṃ aśvā iti jñeyam.*

Five hundred elephants, the same number of chariots, 2500 men and 1500 horses constitute the *Senā*. *Ṛtanā* has 5000 men and 15,000 horses. *Vāhinī* has 50,000 elephants, the same number of chariots, a quarter of a million of men and 50,000 horses.

Some synonyms originally stood in the relationship of *viśeṣya* and *sāmānya*, particular and general. Different aspects or types of a thing had a different word for them. But all these could be expressed through a common word too. Thus *krodha*, *droha*, *īrṣyā* and *asūyā* had a common word *kopa*. The *Mahābhāṣyakāra*'s comment on Pāṇ. *Krudhadruherṣyā-sūyārthānāṃ yaṃ prati kopah* (1.4.37) brings it out very clearly and bears reproduction in full:

*kim eta ekārthā āhosvin nānārthāḥ? kim cātāḥ?  
yady ekārthāḥ kimarthaṃ ṛthaṃ nirdiśyante. atha  
nānārthāḥ kathaṃ kupinā śakyante viśeṣayitum?  
evaṃ tarhi nānārthāḥ. kupau tv eṣāṃ sāmānyam asti.  
nahy akupitāḥ krudhyati, na vā 'kupito druhyati,  
na va 'kupita īrṣyati, na vā 'kupito 'sūyati*<sup>18</sup>.

For eating Sanskrit has words like *bhojana*, *khādana*, *bhakṣaṇa* etc. which represent its different types: *kharaviśadasyārthasyābhayavaharaṇaṃ khādanam*, *dantavyāpārāpūrvakam nigaraṇam* etc., eating of a hard thing existing severally is *khādana*, swallowing preceded by chewing is *bhakṣaṇa* and so on. All of these, however, have a common word which is *abhyavahāra*. Under Pāṇ. *samuccaye sāmānyavacanasya*

17. *Udyogaparva*, 152.21 (Citrasala Press edition).

18. Incidentally it would be interesting to mention the precise distinction between *kopa* and *krodha*. While *kopa* is an internal phenomenon: *āntaro dharmah*, *krodha* is its outward manifestation in the form of distorted movement of limbs and ugly speech: *vikṛta-vākkāya-vyāpārānumīyamānaḥ* or in the words of Nīlakaṇṭha the condition of being distraught in mind: *krodho vikṣiptacittatā*.

(3.4.5), the *Kāśikā* gives the illustration: *odanaṃ bhuñkṣva saktūn piba, dhānāḥ khādety evāyam abhyavaharati. abhyavaharati* is the *sāmānya-vacana* here.

Up to now we have been dealing with the broad tendencies of development of synonymity in words. We now take up a few pairs of the so-called synonyms for finding precise distinction in their meanings on the basis of textual or commentarial evidence.

We first take up *amarṣa* and *roṣa*. The *Rāmāyaṇa* text itself is of great help here. It says, *amarṣaprabhavo roṣaḥ*<sup>19</sup>. *roṣa* results from *amarṣa*. *amarṣa*, as is clear from its formation, is from  $\sqrt{mrṣ}$  «to tolerate» with the negative particle *nañ* compounded with it. It means «intolerance» primarily. *roṣa* is from  $\sqrt{ruṣ}$  «to injure», «to harm», *ruṣa riṣa hiṃsāyām*. It primarily means violence. Under the *Mālatīmādhava* line *yauvanārambhabharitadurviṣahāmarṣaroṣa* etc. the commentator Tripurāri explains these (*amarṣa* and *roṣa*) as intolerance and anger: *akṣamākrodhau* or long persisting anger and temporary anger: *yad vā sthirakrodhatātkaṭikakopau* respectively. Now this seems to be right in view of the popular saying: *krodhaḥ kṛtāparādheṣu sthīro 'marṣatvam aśnute*. That *amarṣa* is *sthirakrodha* while *roṣa* is *tātkaṭika-kopa* further gets an indirect support from the wellknown saying: *kṣaṇe ruṣtaḥ kṣaṇe tuṣtaḥ* where *ruṣtaḥ* is coupled with *kṣaṇe*, *roṣa* being *kṣaṇikakopa* or as said above, *tātkaṭikakopa*.

*Amāra*koṣa mentions *keyūra* and *aṅgada* as synonyms: *keyūram aṅgadaṃ tulye*. But their juxtaposition in a number of verses in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* would preclude such a possibility. The verses where they occur are:

- (1) *jātarūpamayair mukhyair aṅgadaiḥ kuṇḍalaiḥ śubhaiḥ / sahemasūtrair maṇibhiḥ keyūrain valayair api* //<sup>20</sup>
- (2) *aṅgadāni ca citrāṇi keyūrāṇi śubhāni ca*<sup>21</sup>
- (3) *keyūrāṅgadavaidūrya...*<sup>22</sup>
- (4) *aṅgadaiḥ pārihāryaiś ca keyūraiś ca vibhūṣitān*<sup>23</sup>.

The distinction in their meanings is brought out by the *Rāmāyaṇa* commentators Rāma, Govindarāja and Maheśvaratīrtha in the following words: *aṅgadaṃ bāhumūladhāryaṃ bhūṣaṇam, keyūraṃ tadadhobhā-gastham: aṅgadaiḥ kūparoparidhāyair bāhubhūṣaṇaiḥ, keyūrain bhuja-śirovyāpiphaṇākāraśikharayuktābāhubhūṣaṇaiḥ; aṅgadaṃ ūrdhvākāraṃ paṭralatācitritaṃ bāhumūladhāryaṃ bhūṣaṇam, keyūraṃ tasyādhobhāge*

19. *Rāmāyaṇa*, V.62.33.

20. II. 32.8.

21. *Ibid.* II.32.4.

22. *Ibid.* VI.3.43.

23. MBH., *Udyogaparva* 162.16.

*dhāryaṃ valayākāraṃ bhūṣaṇam* respectively. The commentators differ only in peripheral details. In essentials they are saying one and the same thing.

With regard to *hasta* and *pāṇi* too there is difference in meaning. *Hasta* originally meant the fore-arms which is borne out by the use of it as a measurement of length signifying 24 *āṅgulas* or two *vitastis*. *Pāṇi*, however, is that part of the *hasta* which begins with the wrist (*maṇibandha*) and ends with the fingers, cf. Sāyaṇa's comment: *maṇibandhād ūrdhvabhāgaḥ pāṇiḥ* under the *R̥gveda* verse: *tāv aśvinā bhadrahasṭā supāṇī* <sup>24</sup>.

*Sikatā*, *śarkarā* and *vālukā* are used rather promiscuously in Sanskrit. Under the *Mahābhārata* verse

*bhūmipāṣāṇasikatāśarkarāvālukābhasmaśāyinaḥ* <sup>25</sup>

where they occur together Nīlakaṇṭha brings out the difference in them as *sikatāḥ sūkṣmapāṣāṇapāṇsavaḥ*, *śarkarā karkarasahitā mṛt*, *vālukā laghūpalamiśrāḥ sikatā eva*. *sikatā* is minute stony particles, *śarkarā* is gravel, *vālukā* is nothing but *sikatā* mixed with pebbles.

The *Dhātupāṭha* of Pāṇini reads *tarja bhartsa bhartsane* thereby implying their synonymity. But their juxtaposition in the *Rāmāyaṇa* verses:

(1) *bhartsitāṃ tarjitāṃ vā 'pi nānumaṃsyati rāghavaḥ* <sup>26</sup>.

(2) *tarjāpayati māṃ nityaṃ bhartsāpayati cāsakṛt* <sup>27</sup>

would preclude it. The distinction in their senses is very well brought out by Rāma, the commentator, who says: *avācikiḥ bhīṣikā tarjanaṃ*, *vācikiḥ tu sā bhartsanaṃ iti*; *bhartsana* is threatening by words, *tarjana* is threatening by bodily movements. Literature also corroborates this. We have in the *Sākuntala*: *sakhīm āṅgulyā tarjayati* where threatening is by a finger, certainly a *kāyiki bhīṣikā*. Amara explains *bhartsana* as the threatening words: *bhartsanaṃ tv apakāragīḥ* <sup>28</sup> which evidently is *vāciki bhīṣikā*.

*Āśru* and *bāṣpa* both mean tears. But they do have some distinction in them. *Bāṣpa* is *kaṇṭharodha*, choking in the throat, vide, the *Rāmāyaṇa* line: *bāṣpaiḥ pihitakaṇṭhaś ca prekṣya rāmaṃ yaśasvinam* <sup>29</sup> where *pihitakaṇṭhatva* or *kaṇṭharodha*, obstruction in throat, is described to have been caused by *bāṣpa*. In the *Sākuntala* *kaṇṭha*, throat, is said to be *stambhita*, choked, by *bāṣpa*: *kaṇṭhaḥ stambhitabāṣpavṛtti-*

24. *R̥gveda*, I.109.4.

25. *Sāntiparva*, 192, Citrasala Press edn., p. 331.

26. V.27.35.

27. VI.34.9.

28. I.5.14.

29. I.48.3.

*kaluṣaḥ* <sup>30</sup>. Rāghavabhaṭṭa explains *bāṣpa* as the first stage of the tears: *aśruṇaḥ pūrvāvasthā bāṣpam*. It is interesting to note that in the *Rāmāyaṇa* itself this fine distinction in *aśru* and *bāṣpa* seems to have got blurred and *bāṣpa* came to be used even for tears, e.g.,

- (i) *kausalyā vyasrjad bāṣpam prañālīva navodakam* <sup>31</sup>.
- (ii) *bāṣpaprasravaṇair mukhaiḥ* <sup>32</sup>.

*Dīpti*, *kānti* and *dyuti* all mean lustre but each one of them is restricted by usage for the lustre of a different object. In the *Mahābhārata* these are used with reference to three different objects, each going with one, according to the figure of speech *yathāsaṅkhyā*: *dīpti-kāntidyutiguṇaiḥ sūryenduḥjvalanopamaḥ* <sup>33</sup>. *Dīpti* goes with *sūrya*, *kānti* with *indu* and *dyuti* with *jvalana*, i.e., the lustre of the sun is *dīpti*, that of the moon is *kānti* and that of the fire is *dyuti*. Elsewhere too in the same work we have the same specification: *ubhau candrārkaśadyau kāntyā dīptyā ca bhārata* <sup>34</sup>. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, however, goes slightly different. It mentions *dyuti* as that of *divākara*; the sun; e.g., *kāntiśrī-dyutibhis tulyam indupadmadvivākaraḥ* <sup>35</sup>.

*Atithi* and *abhyāgata* mean « guest » commonly but while *atithi-s* signify the guests who are unknown *abhyāgata-s* signify those who are known: *atithayo 'jñātapūrvāḥ, abhyāgatā jñātapūrvāḥ*. This is how the commentators explain them under the *Bhāgavata* verse: *yas tv iha atithin abhyāgatān vā* where both occur side by side.

Amara reads: *samānau marudhanvānau* <sup>36</sup>, *maru* and *dhanvan* have the same meaning. But that they are not so is borne out by their juxtaposition in the *Mahābhārata*, the *Bhāgavata*, etc., e.g.,

- (i) *atītya marudhanvānaṃ prayāntau tṛṣṭitau gajau* <sup>37</sup>.
- (ii) *tataḥ sarasvatīkūle sameṣu marudhanvasu* <sup>38</sup>.
- (iii) *marudhanvam atikramya sauvīrābhīrayoḥ parān* <sup>39</sup>.

Under the second verse Nīlakaṇṭha explains *maru* as a land without water and *dhanvan* as an arid land, *maruṣu nirjaladeśeṣu, dhanvasu jāṅgaladeśeṣu*. Śrīdhara's comment on the third verse is that *maru* is a land without water and *dhanvan* is one where it is scarce: *marur nirudakadeśaḥ, dhanvo 'lpodakaḥ*. Now for *maru* both the commentators are agreed. About *dhanvan* there seems some difference. While according to

30. IV.60.

31. II.62.10.

32. VI.108.25.

33. *Ādiparva*, 126.4.

34. *Ādiparva*, 110.30.

35. VI.111.35.

36. II.1.5.

37. *Droṇaparva*, 101.19.

38. *Vanaparva*, 6.3.

39. *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, X.10.35.



one it is *jāṅgaladeśa*, arid land, according to the other it is one with little water, *alpodako deśaḥ*. The difference, however is superficial. *alpo-dakatva* is one of the special features of *jāṅgaladeśa* which is explained by Caraka as:

*alpodakadrumo yas tu pravātaḥ pracurātapaḥ.  
jñeyah sa jāṅgalo deśaḥ svalparogatamo 'pi ca* <sup>40</sup>.

*Nyāsa* and *nikṣepa* occur together in the *Kāmasūtra* which reads: *prasrte ca paricaye tasyā haste nyāsaṃ nikṣepaṃ ca nidadhyāt* <sup>41</sup>. The commentary *Jayamaṅgalā* explains them as *nyāsāḥ sthāpyāś cirakāla-grāhyāḥ*, *nikṣepo 'lpakālagrāhyāḥ*, *nyāsas* and *nikṣepas* are long-term and short-term deposits respectively.

In the *Vimānasthāna*, Caraka enumerates the speech defects. Among them he mentions the two, *anarthaka* and *apārthaka*, and himself proceeds to explain the difference in them as: *anarthakaṃ nāma yad vacanam akṣaragrāmamātram eva syāt pañcavargavan nārthatayā grhyate, apārthakaṃ nāma yad arthavat paraspāreṇa cāyujyamānārthakam. yathā... cakranakravaṃśavajraniśākārā iti* <sup>42</sup>. *anarthaka* is that speech which is a mere conglomeration of a number of vocables, it does not convey any meaning..., *apārthaka* is that speech which does have some meaning but which lacks coherence.

The *Bhāgavata* puts together the words *udyāna*, *upavana* and *ārāma* in one line: *udyānopavanārāmair vṛtapadmākaraśriyam* <sup>43</sup>. Śrīdhara explains the difference in them as: *udyānaṃ phalapradhānam, upavanaṃ puṣpapradhānam, ārāmaḥ kṛdārthaṃ vanam: udyāna* is a garden with more of fruits, *upavana* with more of flowers, while *ārāma* is a park meant for sport.

Under the *Mahābhārata* verses:

- (1) *latāvalliś ca vegena vikarṣaṇ pāṇḍunandanaḥ* <sup>44</sup>.
- (2) *vṛkṣagulmalatāvallyas tvaksārās tṛṇajātayaḥ* <sup>45</sup>.

*Nīlakaṇṭha* offers diametrically opposite comments. Under the first verse he says *latā bhūcarā, vallī vṛkṣacarā*. *Latā* moves on the ground, *vallī* on the tree. Under the second verse he says: *latā vṛkṣādyārūḍhā gudūcyādayaḥ, vallīo bhūmiprasārā varṣamātrasthāyinyaḥ kūṣmāṇḍādyāḥ, latā-s* hang on the trees etc. like *gudūcī* and so on, while *vallī-s* such as *kūṣmāṇḍa* etc. spread on the ground, and stay there for a year. Under another verse *vallīlatāsaṅkaṭeṣu kaṭajeṣu sthitāṃs tathā* <sup>46</sup> he

40. Caraka Saṃhitā, Vimānasthāna, Adhyāya 4, Nirṇaya Sagar Press, edn., Bombay, p. 243.

41. V.2.9.

42. Ibid., Adhyāya, 146.40.

43. I.11.12.

44. Vanaparva, 146.40.

45. Bhīṣmaparva, 5.17.

46. Ibid., Vanaparva, 155.55.

offers an altogether different interpretation: *vallinām latāpratānāni* which does not make much sense. It seems he is confused here. A closer look at the *Mahābhārata* text itself would have revealed to him the distinction in the meaning of the words. The *Mahābhārata* says:

- (i) *latādharmā dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ śālāḥ sañjaya pāṇḍavāḥ.  
na latā vardhate jātu anāśritya mahādrumam*<sup>47</sup>.
- (ii) *vallī valayate vṛkṣaṃ sarvataś cāpi gacchati.*

*Latā-s* hang on the trees. So do the *vallī-s* with this difference that they, in addition coil round them. The *Rāmāyaṇa* commentators Rāma and Satyatīrtha are right when they explain *vallī-s* as *vṛkṣādyāśritāḥ* and *vṛkṣālingitāḥ* respectively. *vīrudh-s* they explain as *bhūmyādhārāḥ* and *sthalalatāḥ*, the creepers on the ground. Kṣīrasvāmin explains *vallī* as *valate veṣṭate vallī, guḍūcyādir mādavyādiś ca* which is in line with what has been said above. *guḍūcī, mādhavī* etc. are the creepers which hang on the trees and coil round them.

We have taken only a few of the synonyms in this paper by way of specimen. There are a lot more which can be given similar treatment. As a matter of fact the material available is sufficient to fill a reasonably-sized monograph. The divination of the distinction in meanings in well-established synonyms has its own joy. This humble investigator has been prompted in presenting this paper to share this joy with the distinguished assembly of scholars present here.

---

47. *Ibid.*, *Udyogaparva*, 29.49. References from the *Mahābhārata*, unless otherwise indicated, are from the Critical edn. from Poona while those from the *Rāmāyaṇa* are from the Nirnaya Sagar Press edn., Bombay, 1909.